

Meeting Summary
Virginia Disability Commission
<http://dls.state.va.us/disability.htm>

December 17, 2004, 1:00 p.m.
Senate Room A
General Assembly Building

Call to Order/Chairman's Opening Remarks

Lt. Governor Kaine and the Commission members opened the meeting by acknowledging the passing of long-time advocate, Barbara Gilley, who had been an instrumental member of the Disability Commission Housing Workgroup and a frequent presenter at the Commission meetings.

The Lt. Governor also announced that Governor Warner had included \$ 25,000 in Commission appropriations in his proposed budget. This is the amount requested by the Commission in a letter sent to the Governor on Nov. 30, 2004.

Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority

Michael Scione, Executive Director of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA), explained the background of the Fund which was established in 1992, codified in 1995, and received its first allocation of \$500,000 in 1996. In 1997 the first loans were made. In 1999, SunTrust became a partner of ATLFA. Assets have grown substantially from the initial \$500,000 to nearly \$14,000,000. Funding sources have included DRS, VATS, the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative, Children's Hospital, and most recently, VHDA and DHCD.

ATLFA makes low interest loans for adaptive equipment, home modifications, vehicle modifications, and guaranteed loans and loans to families on fixed incomes. ATLFA also lends money for telework computers, office equipment and other assistive technology. Repayment rates are extremely high. It is hoped that the types of loans will be expanded in the future to address other disability related needs than just assistive technology-related. A public service announcement with the Lt. Governor was made and has been highly visible and successful, according to Mr. Scione. In addition, a marketing specialist has been hired.

Recently, the ATLFA has embarked on successful collaboration efforts with the Virginia Housing Development Authority and the Virginia Department for Housing and Community Development. Susan Dewey, Executive Director of VHDA spoke to the \$1,000,000 committed by VHDA to provide down-payment assistance on homes, a new partnership for the fund. DHCD

has committed \$350,000 for home modifications, as explained by Basil Gooden, PhD., from the agency.

Members requested information from Mr. Scione regarding the financing of ATLFA loans and any long-range planning being made. After some discussion of these issues, Mr. Scione agreed to submit more information for the Commission to review.

Virginia's Olmstead Initiative; Review and Recommendations

Julie Stanley, Director of Community Integration for People with Disabilities, provided a presentation to the Commission members on Virginia's work on Olmstead. She began with background on the Olmstead decision and discussed the Task Force, the Task Force Report, Executive Order 61 and the role of the Implementation Team and Oversight Advisory Committee. She explained that the effort includes 18 state agencies under 4 Secretariats as well as consumers, advocates, family members, and providers. Ms. Stanley also noted progress on the cost-out of Phase I recommendations (there are a total of 201 recommendations), submission of a report by the Implementation Team to the Oversight Committee and the Governor, submission of the Oversight Committee's report to the Governor, the joint meeting between the Implementation Team and Oversight Committee, and a meeting between the Implementation Team and state agency ADA coordinators.

Ms. Stanley reviewed the budget amendments approved last year related to Olmstead implementation as well as those in the Governor's current proposed budget just released. These include:

- Housing supplement (\$1.5 million for FY 06) for 200 people with disabilities who want to and can live in more integrated community settings;
- Transition waiver benefits for [persons leaving institutions (\$370,000 GF for FY 06)--\$4,000 per person, one time expense for such things as security deposits, utilities deposits, furniture;
- \$150,000 in increased funding to the Long Term Rehabilitation Case management program to prevent institutional placements and assist with discharges (FY 06);
- Increased funding to Centers for Independent Living (CILS) of \$150,000 for FY 06;
- Expansion of crisis stabilization units as part of mental health restructuring (\$2.9 million for FY 06); and
- Expansion of public guardianship program (\$150,000 FY 06).

Ms. Stanley's presentation can be found on the Commission's website, in addition to the information available on the Olmstead website: www.olmsteadva.com.

Housing Work Group Presentation

Denise Goode gave an update on the work of the Housing Workgroup, noting that the group would begin meeting again in early 2005, and one of the issues still under discussion is the definition of origin of income with regard to housing assistance programs. Denise and Bill Fuller, PhD., VHDA, gave an update on the Virginia Accessible Housing Registry, noting it is on line, describing its components and future steps to be taken to enhance the registry. The Housing Registry has three main components, as described by Dr. Fuller: 1) apartment finder/listing features with information on accessibility; 2) universal design information; and 3) relevant fair housing and other regulatory information. The Commission chair thanked the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities for funding this endeavor.

The Autism Council of Virginia

Linda Oggel, from the Training and Technical Assistance Center gave a presentation on behalf of the Autism Council of Virginia. She requested that the Commission consider funding for the Council to continue its critical work in provider training and curriculum development for those working with children and adults with autism. It was noted that support had been provided by the Department of Education but was not likely to continue. The increased incidence of autism was discussed as were the variety of education and treatment methods and controversial aspects surrounding these efforts. Commission members asked a number of questions regarding treatment modalities.

Commission Discussion of Potential Recommendations

The brain injury waiver was briefly discussed. It was noted that legislation to establish DMHMRSAS as the licensing authority for providers that would deliver services under a waiver was underway. The waiver was not included in the Governor's current budget and the Commission will continue to examine this issue and discuss in January.

Status of the Medicaid Buy In was also noted. There have been challenges in obtaining approval for the waiver, which Virginia submitted to CMS for approval. There has been additional discussion on possible new directions for the waiver, including an examination of health savings accounts. Additional discussion is ongoing.

Funding to replace the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Grant will be discussed at the January meeting.

Following the presentations and discussion, the Commission agreed that it would hold off on budgetary recommendations until the January meeting. The Commission asked for additional information on which agencies currently provided funding for autism related initiatives and what these initiatives are so that they could make an educated decision on the request.

Legislative recommendations:

The Commission endorsed HB 1582 (2005), which had already been introduced by Delegate Reese. This legislation would allow voting through "no excuse absentee ballots" for Virginians aged 65 and older. Current law provides this option for Virginians with disabilities.

The Commission also endorsed Delegate VanLandingham's HB 1433 (2004), which would add planning for areas of accessible housing to localities' comprehensive plans. The Delegate was not in attendance but informed the Commission in advance of the meeting that she will be introducing the legislation again during the 2005 session.

Legislative proposals have not been finalized. The Commission will meet again on January 13 at 2:00 p.m. in Senate Room A (General Assembly Building) to finalize proposals, with particular emphasis on budgetary items.